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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S INITIAL CALL ON DPM EISSAWI

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher Hill for Reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: During an April 30 meeting, DPM Eissawi expressed to the Ambassador enthusiasm for the "visible results" the GOI and USG are achieving under the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA); offered insights into Iraq's disputed internal boundaries; and suggested that many Iraqi political parties are shifting away from overtly religious platforms. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Ambassador made his initial courtesy call on Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Rafi Al-Eissawi April 30. Eissawi is a trained surgeon who hails from Falluja in Anbar Province; one of two DPMs, he co-chairs the Essential Services Joint Consultation Committee under the SFA. Eissawi expressed enthusiasm for the SFA, thanking the U.S. for the spirit of teamwork that is evident within the bilateral working groups. The Iraqi ministries are excited about the SFA, Eissawi said, because it offers a chance to produce "visible results" that will have an impact on the Iraqi people.

¶3. (C) Eissawi also provided an update on the long process aimed at resolving Iraq's disputed internal boundaries. The DPM has formed committees -- which include MPs and other prominent figures from the three regions in question (Ninewa, Kirkuk and Diyala) -- to study the recently released UN report on the boundary issue. Based on that report, Eissawi has asked the committees to provide him constructive ideas on ways forward. The GOI is looking to the people on the ground in the three regions to lead negotiations, Eissawi said; Baghdad will follow their efforts, but its role will be to "react to what the regional committees come up with" or perhaps broker impasses as necessary. Eissawi acknowledged that there has been some criticism of the UN report, which does not offer a list of recommendations; however, he called it a valuable tool to help frame negotiations.

¶4. (C) Regarding domestic politics, Eissawi highlighted a "shift in mood in Iraq" among many political parties away from explicitly religious platforms toward "liberal/secular" agendas. Voters are no longer as interested in "religious political projects" as they were during previous elections, having become aware that such platforms are often a recipe for unrest. "Two years ago, I might not have said this," Eissawi confessed, but a change toward secular politics needs to occur "because of the bad practices of those in power." The Ambassador welcomed this trend and, in response to Eissawi's request, assured him that the US would support it.  
HILL